

THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT BOS MEETING

TOWN OF CHESTER, CONNECTICUT  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
REGULAR MEETING  
April 12, 2023  
Chester Town Hall and via TEAMS

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectman Janecek called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. In attendance included: First Selectman Janecek, Selectman Meehan, Selectman Englert, Cindy Lignar, Richard Tsou, Terri Englert, Richard Strauss, Susan Wright, Rob Bibianni, and Caryn Paradis.

AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Caryn Paradis asked that the BOS consider a proposal for the use of town property to install the Wish Booth as an “art installation”. The proposed location is adjacent to the spot where the Booth was installed during the holiday season (map shared with BOS). The method for securing/anchoring the booth was discussed. No funds are being requested as solar power will provide electricity to the booth.

Board members expressed concerns related to insurance/liability. If approved, a “hold harmless” clause must be included in the insurance documentation. In addition, the BOS recommended that Ms. Paradis consult the ZEO relative to appropriate Zoning permits, (sidewalk use) if required. In addition, neighboring property owners should be updated on the proposal. This item will be discussed further at a future BOS meeting.

Robert Bibiani provided additional information relative to the Food Scrapping program as previously discussed. A group of Chester residents has been working with Deep River, Essex, Region 4 schools, DRES, CES and EES along with Sustainable CT to facilitate a food scrapping program at the schools. At the 3/22/23 BOS meeting, the group requested \$1,500 to facilitate this program. Their funding request has increased to \$2,500 to accommodate a 2-year program, beginning in the 23/24 school year. After 2 years, it is anticipated that the schools will fund this initiative. These funds would predominantly be used to “cart” the scraps away via Blue Earth Composting.

The BOS discussed potential sources of funding for this project; i.e. “Nips”, ARPA. Peter Evankow, Finance Director, will be consulted as to the status of the ARPA/Nips funds.

The BOS recommended that an ARPA application be submitted to the BOS for consideration.

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Michael Joplin has expressed an interest in being appointed as a P&Z Alternate.

Ed Meehan made a motion to appoint Michael Joplin to the P&Z Commission as an alternate member.

The motion was not seconded. To date, no application relative to this appointment has been received in the First Selectman’s office.

Ed Meehan withdrew the motion. This appointment was tabled.

Ed Meehan made a motion to appoint Thomas Enright to the Park & Rec Board (full member). Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Tom Englert made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of the 3/22/23 Board meeting as presented. Ed Meehan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

BUDGET DISCUSSION

At the 4/11/23 Joint BOS/BOF meeting, the BOF forwarded the draft budget to a Public Hearing scheduled on 5/9/23. Notices of the Public Hearing will be published as appropriate.

DISCUSSION - GOVERNANCE REPORT

Ed Meehan provided an update on the guidance provided by Halloran & Sage, Town Attorneys, relative to the process for the formation of a Charter Commission. The Halloran & Sage memo is included with the minutes. In addition, the Town Attorney provided a draft resolution for BOS consideration.

Ed Meehan made the following motion:

WHEREAS, pursuant to CGS 7-188(b), the BOS of the Town of Chester has determined that it is in the Town's best interests to initiate action to draft a Charter for the Town of Chester;

WHEREAS, the BOS seeks to establish and appoint a Charter Commission in accordance with the provisions of CGS 7-190(a); and

WHEREAS, the BOS desires to make recommendations to the Charter Commission in accordance with the provisions of CGS 7-190(b).

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved by the BOS of the Town of Chester that it does hereby initiate the charter adoption process pursuant to CGS 7-188(b).

NOW THEREFORE, be it further resolved by the BOS of the Town of Chester that, pursuant to CGS 7-190(a) within 30 days of adoption of this resolution, the BOS shall by resolution appoint the members of a Charter Commission, consisting of not fewer than five nor more than fifteen electors, not more than 1/3 of whom may hold any other public office in the municipality and not more than a bare majority of whom shall be members of any one political party, which commission shall proceed forthwith to draft a charter.

NOW THEREFORE, be it further resolved by the BOS of the Town of Chester that pursuant to CGS 7-190(b), the Charter Commission appointed herein shall be authorized to consider such matters as it deems desirable or necessary to improve the governance of the Town, including that the following recommendations be directed to the Charter Commission for its consideration forthwith upon the appointment of its members:

1. Review the Chester Governance Study Report (2/9/23) for background in developing the draft Charter.
2. Consider Charter provisions to address the issues that the Town of Chester has been experiencing in recent years that form the basis for drafting a Town Charter as specified in the Chester Governance Study Report, including: increased complexity of the town's government; continuity of executive leadership, diffused executive governance authority; difficulty in recruiting and maintaining professional staff, difficulty in finding volunteers to serve and fill vacancies on boards and commissions; and low Town Meeting participation.
3. Consider Charter provisions to expand the BOS to more than the current three members with staggered terms.
4. Consider Charter provisions providing for shared legislative authority between the Town Meeting and BOS.
5. Consider Charter provisions that align the Town's fiscal authorities with the responsibility to support and achieve Town policy and initiatives.
6. The Charter Commission may consider other provisions beyond those identified above.

NOW THEREFORE, be it further resolved by the BOS of the Town of Chester that pursuant to CGS 7-190(b), the Charter Commission shall submit its draft report no later than May 15, 2024. However, the Charter Commission should use its best efforts to submit its draft report no later than April 1, 2024 to assure that the final report, proposed charter and question(s) will be submitted in order to be considered at referendum in the general election of 2024.

NOW THEREFORE, be it further resolved by the BOS of the Town of Chester that pursuant to CGS 7-190(c), the Charter Commission shall terminate upon acceptance or rejection of its final report by the BOS.

Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Charter Commission Nominating Committee

The BOS authorizes the formation of a Charter Commission Nominating Committee to review the applications to serve and to recommend candidates and its chair for appointment by the BOS at their 5/10/23 meeting.

The Selection Committee is ad hoc and will disband on 5/10/23 regardless of the acceptance or rejection of its proposed slate and configuration.

Ed Meehan made a motion to appoint Bettie Perrault, Carlie Dailey and Jon Joslow to serve on the Selection Commission. Tom Englert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The application for Charter Commission members will be posted on the website and distributed as appropriate.

#### SELECTMEN REPORTS

Charlene reported:

- \* The final report on the Kenyon property has not yet been received; however, verbal reports indicate that no contamination has been found on the property.
  
- \* As previously discussed, Jacobson will facilitate a survey at the Chesterfield Wall to determine property lines in preparation for potential grant funding to repair the wall.

Tom reported:

- \* JW Building Security Project - the Deep River Building Official is insisting that a canopy be built above the ramp. The use of an elevator in lieu of the ramp is more cost effective and is being considered. In addition, the project has been delayed.

#### AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Cindy Lignar, EDC, reported that "Visitor Friendly Initiatives" are a priority for the EDC as tourism has increased over this years, vis a vis, the Sunday Market, First Friday, other events, etc. In particular public rest rooms are a priority for the merchants. Funding opportunities for same are being explored.

Richard Strauss reported that an Informational Meeting on the Region 4 field proposal is scheduled on 4/27/23 @ JW. Information will be posted on the town's website relative to this event. This is a presentation only and not a Public hearing.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Tom Englert made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m. Ed Meehan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Helchowski  
Clerk